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FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0535
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
CIA WASHDC
CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ
DIA WASHDC
HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL
NSC WASHDC
SECSTATE WASHDC 0536

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 000350

NOFORN

DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/AF, DS/TIA/ITA, DS/IP/SPC/SO, AND AF/E

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/08/2029

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [ER](#)

SUBJECT: MINE WORKERS KILLED IN ATTACK IN ERITREA

Classified By: CDA Melinda Tabler-Stone for Reason 1.4 (d)

11. (C/NF) Three Eritreans working for the Australian mining company Chalice Gold Mined Ltd were shot and killed at approximately 1200 hrs on 10/04/09 approximately 25 miles north of Keren. Reliable embassy sources stated that two cars left the Chalice Gold Ltd camp near Zara on the morning of 10/04/09, (approximately 75 miles north of Keren). One car stopped in a village enroute while the other continued south towards Keren on a major road. As the road dipped into the bottom of a ravine, machine gun fire erupted from the right side of the vehicle, killing the passenger in the front seat and the two passengers in the backseat. The driver, though seriously wounded, survived. A short time later the car that had stopped in the village arrived on scene and discovered the shot up vehicle. The wounded driver stated the rate and severity of the gunfire was more intense than rifle fire. Eritrean government (GSE) officials and Chalice Gold Ltd stated the "incident was an isolated incident and unrelated to any mining activities in Eritrea."

12. (C/NF) Post Comments: Although no group has taken credit for this attack, rumors circulating in Eritrea blame the attack on either unknown "Islamists" or Ethiopian government supported groups trying to disrupt the mining sector in Eritrea. The GSE rarely comments on security incidents in Eritrea and it is not surprising that they would try to minimize the severity of this incident. Last week, the GSE hosted a high profile mining conference in Asmara for companies involved in mining in the Horn of Africa. Post does not know what GSE security is in place at the Zara mine site or if it has been increased as a result of this incident.

TABLER-STONE